

Sunlamps

Feb. 28 is deadline for comments on **Food and Drug Administration's** (FDA) proposal to improve the safety of sunlamp products and ultraviolet bulbs intended for use in those products.

To reduce the possibility of sunlamp-related injury by reducing unnecessary exposure and overexposure to sunlamp radiation, FDA's rule would:

- Limit shorter wavelength radiation emissions which pose unreasonable risk.
- Provide for more adequate label warnings and user instructions containing safety information. The label would say:

DANGER—Ultraviolet radiation. Follow instructions. As with natural sunlight, overexposure can cause eye injury and sunburn; repeated exposure may cause premature aging of the skin and skin cancer. Medications or cosmetics applied to the skin may increase your sensitivity to ultraviolet light. Consult physician before using lamp if taking any medication or if you believe yourself to be sensitive to sunlight.

In addition, if the ultraviolet lamp (or bulb) is sold separately, the bulb would also be labeled with a warning along with instructions not to use it in a fixture unless the fixture is equipped with a timer. Other information includes recommendations for minimum distance between user and lamp, maximum exposure time, use of goggles, and the frequency and spacing of exposures.

- Require special lamp bases, protective goggles or other eyewear, timers and controls to help users limit the duration and amount of exposure. (FDA case studies have identified timer failure as one cause of injury.)

The proposed rules apply only to nonprescription sunlamp products that are sold to induce skin tanning—and this includes installations of such products in health spas. FDA says about 800,000 to one million sunlamps are sold in the US every year, and injury reports (for the 48 contiguous states) estimate that hospital emergency rooms treated 10,000 sunlamp-related skin and eye injuries in 1974 and 12,000 in 1975.

The proposal does not include prescription ultraviolet devices or the so-called "black lights," although these items might be regulated in the future.

Details—*Federal Register*: Dec. 30, 1977, page 65189; Feb. 6, page 4871 (correction of Dec. 30 proposal). Send comments to Hearing Clerk (HFC-20), Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857. For more information write or call Glenn Conklin at above address; telephone 301-443-3426.

Meat deboned by machine

March 20 is new deadline for comments on **Agriculture Dept.'s** proposed standards and labeling requirements for tissue from ground bone (TGB).

Because of wide public interest—and differing views—in the proposed regulations, Agriculture has decided to extend the comment period. In addition, a public hearing was scheduled for Feb. 14, but CONSUMER NEWS received notice of the hearing too late for inclusion in the last issue of the newsletter.

Details—*Federal Register*: Jan. 24, page 3284; Oct. 6, 1977, page 54437. CONSUMER NEWS: Jan. 1. CONSUMER REGISTER: Nov. 15, 1977; May 15, 1976. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250. For more information write or call Dr. W. J. Minor at above address; telephone 202-447-6189.

Community credit needs

March 8 is deadline for comments on the development of regulations required under the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) to insure that lending institutions are meeting the credit needs of their communities (including low and moderate income neighborhoods), and that lending policies are in keeping with sound management procedures. Rules to meet these ends are to take effect by Nov. 6, 1978 and will be issued by the **Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Comptroller of the Currency, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board**, and will regulate institutions under their respective jurisdictions.

These agencies are interested in learning, for example, how commentators believe terms, such as "low and moderate income neighborhoods" should be defined, and how "credit needs" should be defined and measured. In assessing whether or not community needs are being met, agencies are interested in comments as to how certain types of credit needs (for example, agricultural loans, business loans, mortgage loans, investments in securities) should be taken into account.

Details—*Federal Register*: Jan. 25, 1978, page 3370. A hearing will be held March 15 and 16 at 10 a.m. in Conference Room E, Terrace Level, Federal Reserve, Martin Bldg. Annex, 20th and C Streets, NW, Washington, DC. (Later hearings will be held in other cities. CONSUMER REGISTER will publish dates and places when they are announced.) Send comments to Secretary, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Washington, DC 20551. For further information write or call Robert J. Lawrence, Deputy Staff Director for Management, Federal Reserve System, Washington, DC 20551; telephone 202-245-3766.

Commodity options trading

March 8 is deadline for comments on a proposal by the **Commodity Futures Trading Commission** (CFTC) amending current regulations to prohibit commodity option transactions (except for commercial interests in connection with their businesses). CFTC is proposing the suspension because of continued fraudulent, unlawful and unsound practices relating to commodity options transactions, despite present regulations intended to protect commodity options customers. Under the CFTC proposal, commodity options trading would be suspended until such time that CFTC "determines that adequate protection to option customers can reasonably be assured."

Details—*Federal Register*: Feb. 6, page 4869; Dec. 6, 1977, page 61831; Nov. 24, 1976, page 51808; Oct. 8, 1976, page 44560. CONSUMER NEWS and CONSUMER REGISTER: Jan. 1, 1977. Send comments to Secretariat, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, 2033 K St., NW, Washington, DC 20581. A public hearing will be held 9 a.m., Feb. 28 at the above address.

Children's sleepwear

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has amended its children's sleepwear flammability standards. Changes are intended to reduce the need for flame-retardant chemicals (such as the potential cancer-causing chemical TRIS) while generally maintaining the present level of protection from fire.

The amendments (1) eliminate the residual flame time test requirement and (2) modify the testing for flammability of sleepwear trim.

Because chemicals that are assumed to be safe one day may turn out to be unsafe later—as testing methods become more sophisticated—CPSC says it wants to do all it can to reduce the need for added chemicals in children's sleepwear.

However, it also wants to make sure its actions do "not unduly reduce the level of safety afforded by the sleepwear standards." CPSC points out that its actions could make available a wider selection of fabrics for children's sleepwear at a lower average cost.

CPSC had originally proposed to exclude children's sleepwear in sizes below size one from the flammability standard because injury data showed relatively few burning incidents associated with that largely immobile age group. However, not enough Commissioners were present to vote on that issue. The amended standards therefore apply to children's sleepwear for sizes 0 through 14, and became effective Feb. 6.

Details—*Federal Register*: Feb. 6, page 4849; Oct. 26, 1977, page 56568. For more information write or call H. Elizabeth Jones, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207; telephone 301-492-6617.

Meat grades

May 1 is dead-end for comments on Agriculture Dept.'s proposal to make meat grades more accurate and uniform and to provide consumers with more accurate information about the meat they buy.

Because Federal meat grading is a voluntary service that is paid for by meat packers who request that meat be graded (in categories such as "Prime," "Choice" and "Good"), it might be confused with meat inspection, which is mandatory. Federal meat inspectors decide whether a cut of meat is wholesome and accurately labeled.

Meat does not have to be graded at all; but if it is, under existing regulations for such grading, there is opportunity for illegal upgrading. In addition, ungraded meat may be represented for sale as being of a better quality than it actually is. Agriculture says the following proposed changes in grading procedures should eliminate such problems:

- Grading would be restricted to only the whole carcass or a side, and only at the plant in which the animal is slaughtered. This would result in more uniformity of grading, and will eliminate regrading of sides and wholesale cuts which have been trimmed of outside fat to make them appear to be of a better grade than the grade originally assigned to the whole carcass. Current regulations permit meat to be graded at facilities other than the packing plant where the animal is slaughtered. For example, grading is now allowed at facilities where the carcass is cut into forequarters, hindquarters or wholesale cuts such as ribs and loins—and this system can result in parts of the same carcass being given different grades (one quarter graded as "US Choice" and another quarter graded as "US Good").

- Meat offered for sale would be marked either with the traditional quality grade or with a new stamp, "US Ungraded." Both graded and ungraded meat would have to be labeled as such all the way through the marketing chain and final sale to consumers.

(The above proposals apply only to beef, calf, veal, mutton and lamb—but not pork, which has no official standards for consumer quality grades.)

The following proposals apply to beef only:

- Kidneys and fat surrounding kidneys, pelvic region and heart would have to be removed before carcasses are graded.

- Carcasses would have to be cut to expose the ribeye at least 30 minutes before grading. This would assure that the marbling (fat mixed with lean meat) and other factors affecting the quality grade would be sufficiently developed for accurate evaluation.

- The yield grade mark could be removed from beef carcasses or cuts which have had the fat layer trimmed to one-half inch or less.

- The term "beef carcass" would have to be defined more specifically.

Agriculture expects the proposed changes "to have a significant impact on all parts of the livestock and meat industry and on the consuming public," and anticipates widespread interest in the proposed changes. Consumers and others are invited to participate in the public hearings that are scheduled at the following locations: (Each day's session will begin at 9:30 a.m.)

March 16
Jefferson Auditorium, S. Agriculture Bldg.
Washington, DC 20250

March 21
Customs House, 555 Battery St., Room 503
San Francisco, CA 94111

March 23
Omaha Hilton Hotel
Omaha, NE 68102

March 28
Federal Office Bldg., Room 556
Atlanta, GA 30303

Even if persons who wish to speak at the sessions have not notified Agriculture before the sessions begin, they will still have an opportunity to be heard.

Details—*Federal Register*: Jan. 23, pages 3140 and 3145. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250. For more information write or call Jerry Goodall at above address; telephone 202-447-4727.

Unordered merchandise

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has published a statement of policy to clarify its 1970 notice on definitions and shipments of unordered merchandise. The provisions of its standards cover only unordered merchandise sent by US mail, although FTC is considering expanding the definition to include unordered merchandise that is *not* mailed (such as packages delivered to homes by private delivery firms).

A summary of the standards follows:

- "Unordered merchandise" means merchandise mailed without the prior expressed request or consent of recipient.

- Mailing of unordered merchandise is prohibited except for free samples clearly and conspicuously marked as such and merchandise mailed by a charitable organization soliciting contributions.

- Any other merchandise mailed may be treated as a gift by the recipient, who may use it or discard it in any way he or she sees fit—without any obligation to the sender. All such merchandise must have attached to it a clear and conspicuous statement telling the recipient that he or she may treat the merchandise as a gift with no obligation to the sender.

- No mailer of any merchandise mailed in violation of FTC's rules may bill any recipient of such merchandise.

Details—*Federal Register*: Jan. 31, page 4113.

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consumer comment

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These forms are provided for you to use, if you wish, in commenting on these items. For more lengthy comments, feel free to use a plain sheet of paper. Send comment forms to addresses listed in CONSUMER REGISTER summaries. CONSUMER NEWS is publishing these forms in cooperation with the **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**.

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